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THE NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM: IS IT STILL RELEVANT?

BY

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The National Guard State Partnership Program: Is it Still Relevant?

by

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ABSTRACT

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Now more than ever the National Guard has an opportunity to take an active part in shaping the U.S. National Security

Strategy. The State Partnership Program provides a mechanism by which Guard members can hone there Major Occupational Skills

(MOS) related skills and demonstrate to foreign citizens what democracy really means. The National Guard State Partnership has paired 24 states with foreign partners in Europe, Central, and South America. Through this effort the countries involved receive humanitarian assistance to improve living conditions in their respective countries. The Guard members involved gain the experience of an overseas deployment and learn to overcome the hardships of accomplishing their missions under the most austere conditions. In this paper I examine the Kentucky - Ecuadorian partnership in hopes of highlighting the successes and making recommendations for improvement of future operations.

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THE STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM— IS IT STILL RELEVENT?

Since the downfall of the of the former Soviet Union, the United States has played an active role in assisting Eastern European countries with establishing democratic governments and free market economies. When the militaries of those countries wanted assistance in reorganizing their post-Cold war armies to reflect a more democratic system. The Department of Defense went to the National Guard for assistance primarily because of their unique role in civil military activities. The State Partnership for Peace (SPP) program linked the Guard with more than 20 countries, fostering relationships with nations that were once considered our enemies. Due to the successes in Eastern European countries the Program was expanded to Latin America, where the Guard is paired with four countries

In this paper I will examine Army National Guard (ARNG) engineer activities in South America—particularly Ecuador to highlight the importance of National Guard overseas deployment training as an operation consistent with U.S. national strategy. The opportunity to deploy to and operate in a foreign country under austere conditions enhances the ability to adapt and to perform under difficult conditions of two engineer battalions and supporting personnel. Additionally, it provides soldiers

with the opportunity to be valuable contributors to the U.S. Humanitarian efforts while training on wartime missions.

BACKGROUND

The State Partnership Program, established as a national, initiative "in the spirit of" The North Atlantic Treaty

Organization's (NATO) Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, seeks to advance US national security policy through constructive military relationships with developing countries under non-confrontational conditions.²

The Partnership for Peace

This program was adopted at a NATO summit in Brussels in January 1994.³ The initial hope was that the program might attract at lease twelve participants. Although it was at first derided by skeptics to be a stalling tactic to defer NATO enlargement remarkable success has been demonstrated by the program. Evidence of these successes is the accelerated growth in membership and military structure, its rapid development of a far reaching program of training and exercise activities, and the early contribution of Partners to real military operations like NATO's International Force (IFOR) in Bosnia. In the first two years of existence PfP linked 42 countries as well as

becoming a permanent cornerstone in NATO's security architecture.4

Romania was the first to sign the Partnership Framework

Document on January 28, 1994 and within a year 23 other

countries followed suit. By signing the framework document

Partners commit to adhere to core NATO values of fundamental

freedoms and human rights and of safeguarding peace through

democracy. Partner states agree to cooperate with NATO in their

efforts to insure democratic control of defense forces,

transparency in defense planning, and the development of

compatible military forces able to undertake NATO missions in

search and rescue, peacekeeping and humanitarian activities, or

to operate under UN or OSCE authority.⁵

In its start-up phase the PfP program more than proved its worth in practical application by creating for the 42 nations involved, a working foundation for mutual trust and confidence reaching far beyond PfP and IFOR activities. As one would expect, there were differences between Partner states in terms of their objectives in PfP, their military capabilities and rates of activity in the program. Due to the flexibility of the program these differences were resolved. Significant factors affecting the resolution of these differences were start-up momentum, relatively low initial costs, IFOR participation and the use of the rule of compromise and consensus.⁶

With 26 member countries in early 1998 the PfP shows considerable promise as a contributing factor to stability and peace in Europe. For example "Several conditions will likely characterize its continuing evolution, such as prolonged periods of relative peace and economic prosperity in Western Europe and a continuing potential for internal conflicts around Russia's periphery. The potential for conflicts in the Middle East, which could have implications for NATO nations and for the states of Eastern and Central Europe, also remains high."

State Partnership Program

The State Partnership Program (SPP) is a component of the United States National Security Strategy of selective and flexible engagement in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. The purpose of SPP is to provide opportunities for non-NATO countries to create a foundation for full participation in a shared environment of regional and international military, political, and economic activities.

In the early 1990'then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Collin Powell, and the Commander in Chief of the European Command General John Shalikashvili, sought to fill the strategic vacuum subsequent to the fall of the Soviet Union and the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Central Europe. The concept of a Partnership for Peace was seen as an opportunity

for the United States to influence the emerging governments in Eastern Europe. 8

The State Partnership Program started in 1992 when Latvia requested assistance in forming a reserve force similar to the National Guard. Lieutenant General John B. Conaway, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, was directed by the Secretary of Defense to form a plan of action. The Pennsylvania National Guard was paired with Lithuania and by December partnerships had been formed pairing Estonia with Maryland and Latvia with Michigan. There were initially twenty states that formed Guard/Foreign Partner relationships. The unique nature of the citizen-soldier concept allows National Guard members to serve as role models, in both word and deed, for the promotion of democratic ideals and deference to civilian authority.

South Carolina Guardsmen saw first hand how the staff of an Albanian hospital cares for patients with no running water. The Indiana and Alabama Guards participated in rebuilding a Romanian school and an orphanage for HIV infected children. The Georgia Guard recently visited their partner country, the Republic of Georgia, to help restore running water and electricity to an orphanage there. While combat engineers worked on restoring utilities, another group of soldiers brightened up their walls with colorful murals of cartoon characters and built a new playground. The children who live at the orphanage were

temporarily housed in crowded apartments with no running water and only sporadic electric service. About 35 children were crammed into each apartment. The restored water and electricity allowed the children to return home.

The program is so successful and well received by Eastern European countries that it has been expanded to Latin America, where the National Guard is paired with four additional countries.

The program has emerged as a cost-effective diplomatic tool. The annual cost is estimated at less than \$3.5 million. The partnership cannot be established until a request it made by the country. The ambassador for the requesting county will contact the Commander in Chief (CINC) who makes it part of his country plan and forwards the request to the State and Defense Departments. Once these departments approve the request it is forwarded to the National Guard Bureau (NGB) who pairs a state with the requesting country. NGB attempts to link the nation to a state with similar characteristics. Once these similarities have been determined the state is asked to participate. Thus far governors and the National Guard have responded positively to the chance to participate.

The National Guard is the lead agent for the State

Partnership Program. Beginning with Latvia, Estonia, and

Lithuania, the SPP sought to align the National Guard with

partners in Central and Eastern Europe and in former Warsaw Pact nations, excluding then-East Germany and the former Soviet Union. All military-to-military contacts conducted as part of the program are reviewed and coordinated with the appropriate theater commanders, the U.S. Atlantic Command, the Departments of the Army and Air Force, the Joint Staff and the Interagency Working Group. Because events are based on guidance from an ambassador's country plans, a commander's theater plans and the directives of the Joint Staff the start partnership program has become a valuable tool for diplomats and theater commanders working to solidify democratic processes in Eastern Europe, Eurasia and Latin America.

The Department of Defense established the Joint Contact Team Program and its operational arm, the military liaison team to assist with coordination of Partnership Activities. Two other organizations, the joint contact team and the traveling contact team, continue to play important roles in opening and maintaining links to nations moving away from the Soviet experience. This management structure, which anticipated the 1994 creation of the PfP, is used by the Army National Guard for its SPP activities. 12

The National Guard Leadership refers to the program as a "bridge to America" because it provides the people from partner counties an opportunity to visit the United States. All parties

involved learn a great deal about the customs and traditions of the host countries. Also National Guard members are afforded the opportunity to visit places that would have been in accessible otherwise.

A study conducted in 1995 examined the role of National Guard State Partnership Program (NGSPP) in promoting democracy. Information was solicited from NGSPP coordinators in thirteen U.S. states. The primary intent of the study was to solicit the creative efforts of each state, additionally it measured and defined initiatives that were taking place in partnered nations. The findings indicated that nearly all of the newly independent nations were functioning with a parliamentary form of democracy, and these governments were indeed making progress in democratic reforms.

The National Guard State Partnership Program is not totally successful. For example, the National guard was criticized by a senior military leader in Albania for creating false expectations when a two-week assistance visit by a North Carolina engineer unit failed to produce the basis for a modern American-style hospital. The Albanian leader said that Walter Reed Hospital was the example of what had been expected. The Belarus US country team canceled SPP exercises as progress by Belarus toward meeting PfP and SPP criteria has been lacking. Observers felt that Belarus was more inclined to reunite with

Russia on substantive issues than most other newly independent states. 13

A Strategy Research Project (SRP) prepared in 1997 by
Lieutenant Colonel Charles R. Webb documented the success of the
State of Georgia and Nation of Georgia partnership. These
results appear to be indicative of successes throughout Europe.

Equally successful where projects completed in Central

America by members of America's Guard Force. In the early 1970s

the Florida National Guard deployed to Puerto Rico and in 1984

the Guard began participating in a Joint Chiefs of Staff
approved engineer road building and medical readiness training

exercises in Central America. Since that time more than 120,000

Army National Guard soldiers have trained in Latin America. 14

The expanded use of the National Guard in these countries continues to prove the National Guard State Partnership Program to be a cost-effective means to foster good will and assist member countries with the establishment of economic and political stability.

In the summer of 1998 the Kentucky National Guard participated in an exercise supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and US Southern Command to enhance the developing SPP relationships in Ecuador.

EXECUTION

United States Army South (USARSO) Operations Order 97-29 for JOINT CHIEF OF STAFF EXERCISE, NUEVOS HORIZONTES 1998

ECUADOR was published on 2 April 1997. Joint Task Force (JTF) Kentucky, in conjunction with the Government of Ecuador (GOE) was directed to conduct engineer and medical operations in the Esmeraldas and Manabi Provinces of Ecuador, during the period 6 Jun to 22 August 1998. JTF Kentucky would renovate, construct, and improve public facilities in their Area of Operation (AO).

The deployment of the Task Force was by sea and air with an advance party to arrive in Ecuador not later than 6 June 1998. The majority of TF personnel rotated into and out of Ecuador beginning 20 Jun 1998 and ending 22 August 1998. Selected personnel designated the duration staff remained in Ecuador throughout the exercise to ensure continuity.

The exercise was conducted in six phases.

Phase I - Pre-deployment

During this pre-deployment phase personnel and resources for deployment were identified. The JTF was tasked to construct two base camps and conduct sustainment operations while constructing eight new schools and clinics. Additionally they were to maintain thirty kilometers of main supply routes (MSR) and conduct three medical readiness training exercises (MEDRETES). Preparation of engineer plans, estimates, bills of

materials (BOM), and contract support requirements had to be accomplished. In-country leadership reconnaissance was the only mechanism by which the goals could be accomplished satisfactorily. Unit preparation included but was not limited to training based on mission essential task lists (METL), publishing and distribution of OPORDS, DIPNOTES, and standing operating procedures (SOP).

Phase II

This phase of the operation dealt with the deployment of equipment and resources from 02 Jan 98 thru 06 Jun 98. This was a labor intensive task that required technical inspections (TI) by United State Army South Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics (USARSO DCSLOG) and task force personnel of vehicles and equipment from the Theater Equipment and Maintenance Site (TEAMS) at Ft. Kobbe, Panama. Upon completion of these TIs which were conducted jointly in CONUS the equipment and resources were staged for deployment. The equipment was then moved to the staging area to the sea port of embarkation (SPOE).

Phase III

The advance deployment was accomplished from 06 Jun 98 through 20 Jun 98. This included the actual deployment of personnel from CONUS, off loading of equipment at SPOD, staging

and movement of the equipment/resources from SPOD to base camp and construction of the base camps.

Phase IV

This phase of the operation was the actual deployment of the first units from CONUS and initiation of construction projects that were to be complete during the operation. The deployment was a major undertaking considering that multiple units were deployed from three different airports. Once units arrived in Ecuador formal opening ceremonies were conducted and plans for redeployment to home station were completed.

During a five month period units of the Kentucky National Guard participated in construction and remodeling activities in the Ecuadorian Province of Esmeraldas. (see figure 1) Three new schools were built and one was rehabilitated. Additionally a two room medical clinic was built in the province of Esmeraldas. To successfully accomplish these tasks building sites had to be prepared, landscaping completed and pit type latrines constructed.

The projects detailed above are Humanitarian & Civic

Assistance (HCA) projects additionally the following Exercise

Related Construction (ERC) was accomplished.

- 1. Construction of a main base camp (Bluegrass)
- 2. Maintenance facility and heavy equipment parking area

- 3. Construction of a forward base camp
- 4. Provide drainage ditches and culverts for the community of Corondelet.
- 5. Establish approximately 1000 feet of street to the clinic in Ricaurte.
- 6. Build concrete pads in San Francisco for the temporary school
- Provide maintenance of approximately 8 kilometers of river run surface roads.¹⁵

All projects were nominated by the Government of Ecuador in conjunction with the US Military Group in Ecuador. It was deemed that all projects would provide significant humanitarian benefit to Ecuador and simultaneously afford US engineer soldiers and excellent training opportunity. 16

Additionally 3 Medical Readiness Training Exercises

(MEDRETE's) were conducted at various locations in the Province.

Concurrent to these MEDRETE's medical personnel provided Level I

(unit level) medical support to the JTF that included outpatient

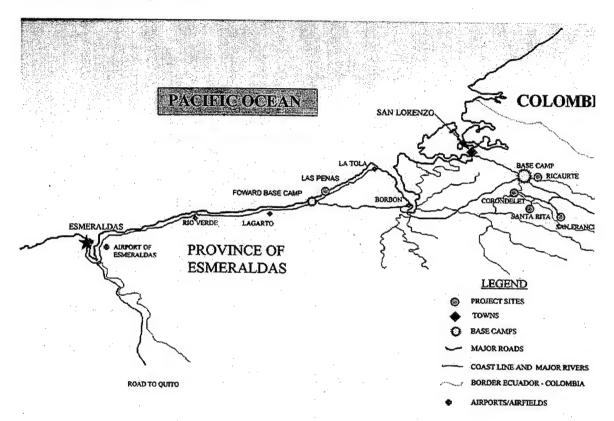
treatment (sick call), preventive medicine support, emergency

car for patient stabilization prior to evacuation and patient

evacuation.

A group of Kentucky National Guard medical personnel led by Colonel Willis McKee spent a week in Ecuador teaching some of the most up-to-date life saving techniques to Ecuadorian doctors

and nurses. The group is yet another example of guard members carrying out the U.S. military's national security plan for peace-time engagement.



PROJECTS LOCATION MAP

Figure 1 1

"It's a mission," said McKee. "We will show civilian and military medical professionals some additional emergency procedures that will help them save lives." 17

McKee has a viable medical practice in Frankfort Kentucky.

But he says his work as a Guard member does not take time away

from his practice. He said he uses his own spare time--weekends and vacation time--to continue to serve his country.

Phase V

This was the redeployment phase of the exercise and was accomplished from 20 Jun 98 to 8 Aug 98. This involved completion of all projects and the transfer of ownership to the host nation. A formal operation closing ceremony was held to mark the end of the exercise and accomplish the above mentioned tasks. A phased recovery and transport of equipment and resources to (SPOE) Ecuador was completed during this time. This involved closure of the base camps, all necessary loading activities and the return of personnel, resources, and equipment to CONUS and Panama.

PHASE VI (08 Aug - 15 Sep 98)

This was the final phase of the operation and involved clearing of all funding accounts and properly accounting for all funds utilized during the exercise. Once deployed equipment and resources were returned to CONUS it was to be unloaded and moved to home stations. When all these tasks were accomplished the duration staff redeployed to CONUS.

BUDGET

The approved budget for this exercise was $$10,126,326^{18}$.

Type	Budgeted	Committed
CONUS OMA	\$573,000	\$439,534
OCONUS OMA	\$794,426	\$924,212
H&CA	\$400,000	\$358,070
ERC	\$224,000	\$171,746
DCCEP	\$59 , 900	\$32,989
LATAM	\$5 , 000	\$1,674
PH/IT CONUS	\$400,000	\$92,802
PH/IT OCONUS	\$900,000	\$786,396
Sea Lift	\$3,584,000	\$556,919
Air Lift	\$3,186,000	\$1,360,500
Grand Total	\$10,126,326	4,724,842

Table 1

SUCCESSES

The most obvious success of this operation is reflected in the budget figures. An operation that completed all assigned missions at a cost that is \$5.4 million less than the amount programmed speaks well of the JTF participants and planners.

JTF Kentucky successfully constructed 5 schools, 3 clinics, 4 latrines, and maintained 40 kilometers of roadways during the period 06 Jun 98 to 22 Aug 98. Medical personnel met the medical needs of the Task Force and successfully conducted 3 MEDRETES.

The Task Force's Higher Headquarters and State Headquarters Kentucky National Guard coordinated the deployment of 1300

troops and the necessary equipment and material to support the operation.

For the first time Kentucky Air National Guard personnel had teamed up with the Kentucky Army Guard soldiers in an overseas operation. Nuevos Horizontes was the largest overseas deployment of Kentucky Guard troops since the Persian Gulf War. More than 1,300 airmen and soldiers had been rotated through a five month period, joining various other active and reserve units from the Air Force, Army and Marines. A large portion of the Kentucky troops were transported to Ecuador via Kentucky Air National Guard C-130H transports, in much the same fashion they might be deployed under wartime conditions. 19

The primary objective of the operation was to train soldiers and airmen. The operation not only provided an excellent opportunity to refine individual military professional skills, it also allowed the Guard to mobilize and deploy from the United States into a remote environment while helping to improve the quality of life for the people of Ecuador.

The true success are reflected by the members of the Kentucky Guard as they relate their impressions of the operation. "Its amazing what they don't have here," said Staff Sgt. Mary Thurman, who accompanied the 123rd Civil Engineer Squadron to Las Penas. A school teacher in the civilian world, Thurman was been moved by what she's seen and feels strongly

about the importance of the mission she had committed herself toward.

"The school they use now has no floor, no roof or doors. When we finish, these children will be better equipped to learn." 20

"This is some of the best training in the world" was the catch phrase of the exercise. "This is the ultimate training" said Maj. Bob Hayter, logistics officer for the task force.

"This is the first time a lot of us have had the opportunity to work in an unimproved theater. You can't depend on anything here. You have to provide your own support, you have to make things happen that you normally wouldn't do in the United States. If you break something you can't just go down to the hardware store and get a new one. It's been a real challenge for me and everyone else here."

Senior Master Sgt. Tim O'Mahoney observed, "All of this follows our wartime skill, as far s what we'd be doing if we went to war. It teaches our folks what combat conditions are like. If we had to do this any other way, well, there's no way to duplicate this. No way."²¹

LTG Ed Baca, Chief of the National Guard Bureau summed up the success of the operation when he said of the Task Force members, "They're doing the right thing for this country, and they're doing the right thing for the United States."²²

CHALLENGES

The many success of operation Nuevos Horizontes 98 were marred by a significant tragedy. Major Robert S. Hacker, Operations officer was killed in an automobile accident while serving in Ecuador. Though not directly related to Task Force activities the incident demonstrates the necessity for heightened safety measures during any operation.

The deployment operation provided a significant challenge for all planners and participants. Air deployment schedules were often changed on short notice creating considerable difficulty for all concerned.

Being unfamiliar with the Ecuadorian environment also created problems for the Task Force. The main supply route was a gravel road that ran along the coastline. Several portions of the road—the only land access to the construction sites—were obliterated by landslides. This caused the Task Force planners to develop alternate plans. One was to travel along the beach at low tide. Travel time for the sixty mile trip could take from six to twelve hours depending upon conditions. A more desirable plan was the use of LCU's which were borrowed from the U.S. Army in Panama. By traveling along the coast and up the river to the base camps travel time was cut to approximately three to four hours depending upon the weather.

The most desirable solution was the us of UH-60 Blackhawks originally tasked with medical evacuation to assist with the transportation of essential equipment and personnel.

Maintenance of equipment and property accountability was also a challenge. This is not a new issue and should be incorporated with the training scenario to insure that all equipment is properly maintained.

RECOMMENDATION

The State Partnership Program should be continued and expanded. Caution should be exercised to insure that objectives aren't unreasonable or impossible to accomplish.

As demonstrated in Operation Esmeraldas members of the National Guard can enhance their MOS related skills while providing much need assistance. In doing this the soldiers and the State Area Command (STARC) experience a real life mobilization. The problems encountered during this exercise were educational to all those who participated. At the same time members of the participating units were performing a valuable service to a country in need. The citizens of Ecuador were introduced to the concept of the citizen solider. This is a new concept to the citizens of many host countries. The idea of soldiers who are civilians—representing a cross section of

occupations and yet forming a capable and deployable military force—is difficult for many of them to understand.

Guard Members must continue to represent the positive qualities of living in a democracy to a group of individuals who are accustomed to a system in which members of the military aren't allowed to vote in order to maintain a separation between the ruling authority and the armed forces. Previous experiences with members of the armed forces had not been pleasant. Citizens were accustomed to soldiers taking their personal property or assaulting members of their families.

Many of the democratic governments that have been formed remain fragile. We must insure that these governments remain in place for a sufficient amount of time to strengthen. Those who are opposed to a democratic form of government must not be allowed to take it down. We have assisted in the training of their soldiers an must see that the military is used to preserve democracy not destroy it.

National Guardsmen can demonstrate to host country military and civilian leaders the value of being citizens soldiers, but the underlying principles may require a long period of evaluation before finding acceptance. The main reason for dissonance is often related to the inability of the host country economies to provide the dual work opportunity for would-be citizen soldiers. Most host country economies simply cannot

create conditions in which an individual can find work as a civilian while at the same time serving as a member of the military and receiving compensation for that service. The model of the National Guard is out of reach, at least for now, however, does not diminish its value as an abiding example.

NATO Deputy Secretary General Sergio Balanzino set a standard with his observation that "perhaps the other NATO nations' reserve forces can mirror what has been demonstrated by US National Guard State Partnership Programme.²³

CONCLUSIONS

The viability of the State Partnership Program has been demonstrated on numerous occasions in many locations. The participation of the Kentucky National Guard in Ecuador is another of many demonstrated successes. Not only the citizens of Ecuador receive improved educational and health facilities the members of the Kentucky National Guard gained valuable insight into the complexities associated with mobilizing and deploying to foreign soil. The training value to the State Headquarters, the Task Force Higher Headquarters, and the Task Force is immeasurable.

Major General Michael W. Davidson said it best, "Guard members who are civilian soldiers, give citizens, military and

leadership from other countries a view of how the military operates in a democracy."24

"The first thing Ecuador gets, and it is an immediate payoff, is better disaster relief," said Davidson. "The second benefit that they get is a real world lesson of democratization. They get a vivid example of democracy in action.

"The benefit of using citizen soldiers for that is they get a role model for using their citizen-soldiers, which is a new concept in South America and Latin America. This is important stuff we are doing here, "

The National Guard has been instrumental in establishing democratic forms of government in Europe and Latin America. We have demonstrated our desire to provide assistance when requested. This is a program that is beneficial to host nations in that it seeks to foster democracy, develop open market economies and support humanitarian ideals.

The State Partnership Program is a commitment of Americans to the success of the democratic process in the partner nations. This program supports NATO and its Partnership for Peace objectives, particularly those dealing with civilian control of the military. It has proven to be a practical, effective method of helping to plant and nurture the seeds of democracy within Central and Eastern European countries, the former Soviet Union and Latin America. The program emphasizes the highest standards

of a ready and accessible defense force, subject to civilian control, while helping build democratic institutions by encouraging open market and reinforcing humanitarian values.

The State Partnership Program is a vital part of the United States Military Strategy. It is a cost-effective plan that has shown positive results and has the potential for greater successes in the future. (4508)

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